"Training of Trainers"

Introductory course to facilitating social learning and stakeholder engagement in natural resource management contexts

RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

Module 4
Topic 4.2: Practicalities of implementation

4.2.1: Introduction

The actual practice of education is how to **facilitate good learning** using appropriate methods of teaching and learning – according to context and the needs of the learners.

Now you will integrate (combine) your knowledge and experience to **implement** a successful learning process in your workplace / community.

In order for you to do this, this section aims to develop your skills and competencies in **managing and facilitating learning**. In previous sections you have looked at teaching and social learning theory and methods. This Module aims to assist you in ensuring the effective mediation of your learning process by looking at the more general skill of managing and facilitating the learning situation in a well-structured way (also refer back to **Topic 2.4** – Practicalities of Stakeholder Engagement).

*In this theme we are primarily concerned with the **implementation and evaluation of an environmental learning programme** – how to facilitate good learning through the use of appropriate approaches to teaching and learning according to context and the needs of the learners.*

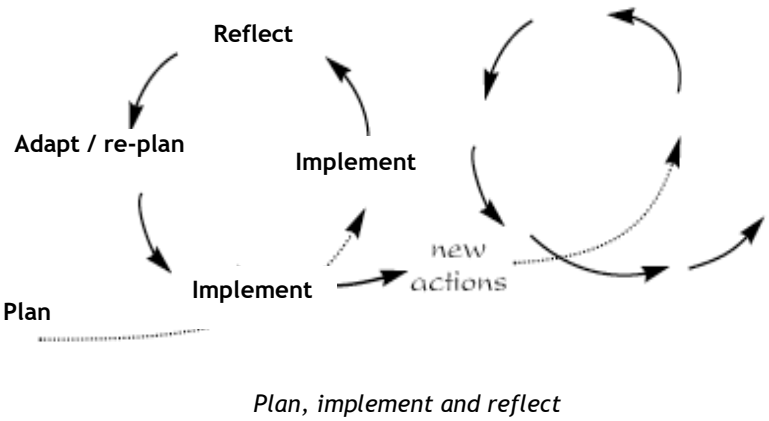


Figure 1: Planning, implementation and reflection cycle of a learning process

4.2.2: Practical considerations when developing a learning process

We have carefully been through every step of creating your unique learning process from contextual profiling, to stakeholder engagement, to working with information to inform your design. Now that you have considered all these aspects of your learning process we need to look at the practical considerations that one needs to take into account when implementing a learning process.

- **Consideration of learning styles:** Making sure to teach for a variety of learning styles is important to the development and implementation of effective learning processes.
- **Audience:** Who will be part of this learning process? Do you have a mix of participants, such as students, municipal workers and community members? How many participants will be in your learning process?
- **Delivery mode:** What is the best way to get your message across? Is web-based training more appropriate, or should mentoring be used? Where will the training be based? Can a training venue be used for a portion of the training and field excursions run for the practical aspects of your learning process? Some learning processes will include a variety of delivery methods.
- **Budget:** How much money do you have to spend on this learning process? Are there other sources of funding that could supplement your budget (from your work, NGOs, who else?)? Do not overshoot your budget!
- **Timelines:** What needs to be taught? How long will it take to develop the training materials? How will you sequence the information? Is there a deadline for training to be completed? How long is your learning process? Have you created a schedule for the learning process?



4.2.2.1: Consideration of learning styles:

You have been through Module 2 and 3 which talk in depth about different methods and processes guided by learning theory and consideration of the contextual profile of your NRM issue. You now have a powerful platform from which to truly uncover the best method and learning style for your learning process.

Activity 4.2.1: Your teaching style: Think back to the past Modules and answer these questions. You can answer them for yourself or you can discuss it with a peer:

- What learning theory really appealed to you or makes sense in your learning process?
- How does your current understanding of the issue lead you to choose which teaching method will be best?
- How have you effectively catered to your participants learning needs and abilities with your choice of learning activities?
- Why are these the best activities you can use for this context?

4.2.2.2: Audience:

Briefly, what do you know about your participants? Whether you are a manager running this session in-house or an independent facilitator running an open session, it is worth spending a few minutes thinking about your potential audience. In **Topic 3.3** you were given many leading questions to help you understand your participants/stakeholders and what they may require from your learning process. Revisit these questions to make sure that you understand your audience.

Another important consideration when looking at our participants is to know how many will be attending. The number of participants expected should influence the design of your learning process and the methods and tools you will use in order to make the biggest impact.



Number	Design implications
6 or fewer	Not really a 'workshop' or similar; the style would be even more informal than a workshop, with the facilitator probably sitting mostly with the group – best suited to group coaching if you're running it
7 to 16ish	This number is perfect for most workshops and allows one-to-one contact with everyone during the session to ensure they're 'getting it'; facilitator up front and with group during exercises
17 to 30ish (large workshop/ seminar)	Acceptable as a large workshop if there is more than one facilitator, lots of space and very well structured and not essential to have one-to-one contact with all in each session – for example, a longer programme or a knowledge- rather than skills-based subject; facilitator would need to be up front in order to reach the group clearly, but still working among the group during exercises
31 to 60ish (seminar)	Though many seminars have smaller groups, interactivity may be reduced at this size compared with a workshop. Seminar if individual contact time is not important in the session; facilitator up front mostly
60 upwards (large seminar/ lecture or conference)	Again, lectures can of course be given to smaller numbers, but at this size interactivity is usually even less than a seminar and very little individual attention given. Clever combinations of up-front explanations and interactive audience exercises can help this

Figure 2: The effect of group size and design implications

4.2.2.3: Delivery mode:

Whether a boardroom with an immovable table, a lecture theatre or a converted warehouse, the venue (particularly if outside your control) can have ramifications on your design; therefore, it's one of the earliest things to get sorted out.

The ideal room: An ideal room would comprise the following:

- Natural lighting – almost essential for sessions longer than a couple of hours. Lots of floor space – ideally as much floor space again as there is occupied by seated areas (including tables).
- Ability to move tables around (some are fixed, too heavy or too large to offer positioning flexibility).

- Proximity to outdoors, public space (e.g. large hotel lobby) or breakout rooms. You will need access to the room at least an hour before the session (more if it's a particularly complex set-up).

Solutions to non-ideal rooms: If for whatever reason you get landed with a non-ideal room, here are some workarounds to the commonest issues.

No natural lighting:

- Use break-out rooms or other outside space if it's a long session.
- Incorporate 'walkabout' energizing exercises that get people out and into natural light for short bursts.
- Keep each section short (no more than 30–40 minutes) with plenty of out-of-room energy or 'natural' breaks.

No or very little floor space or opportunities for movement:

- Get people to swap seats for various exercises.
- Get them out of the room on walkabouts.
- Move chairs around into small groups for certain exercises (dependent on space).

Activity 4.2.2: What materials/resources will you use?

1. Look at the list below of useful things to have in a learning process. Tick which ones you will use. Why are you using them?
2. Tick the ones that you would like to use but don't have? Why do you need them? Can you acquire them? What creative ways can you use to substitute this resource?

▣ projector screen/overhead projector screen; ▣ flipchart/stand; ▣ posters; ▣ handouts. ▣ wallcharts/flowcharts; ▣ glasses/bottles on tables; ▣ table decorations/toys. ▣ Long brown-paper wallcharts depicting information and/or timelines. ▣ Colour-coded areas or areas marked off on the floor to help people change into a different 'frame' of mind. ▣ Colour-coded tablecloths for team identity or activity changes. ▣ Activity stations set up around the room and screened or covered. ▣ Coloured shapes stuck under people's chairs ready for review energizers. ▣ Depending on time and resources, wall coverings depicting the theme of the session. ▣ Floor charts, games or maps leading people to different activities such as treasure hunts and floor noughts and crosses. ▣ Areas of the room dedicated to different activities or skills, again to help people get into the right state of mind for them.

What other resources might be useful? Make a list of the resources you might need to implement your learning process.

4.2.2.4: Timeline:

One common temptation when planning your first learning process is to cram too much into them, therefore depriving your participants of the opportunity to dip out of work or life and really get on board some useful concepts and/or skills.

Never underestimate the value of simply giving people the time away from their day-to-day responsibilities in order to take time out to consider their life or work; the space you create

within the workshop and the opportunities you give your group to apply what you are sharing with them may sometimes be the only chance they get in the near future to use the material.

It might be of more value and contribution if you offer a number of shorter sessions than if you offer only one or two. For example, or you could divide a one-day learning into four, evening, breakfast or lunchtime events that are not only easier to slot into a busy week but also spread the learning over a longer time, giving each person more chances to try out the learning for themselves and build on it bit by bit.

Also do try to keep to the times as you have set them out in the program. Many facilitators do not get particularly worried if they have to move the break by twenty minutes or so because they have overrun in a session. It happens, but I would issue a note of warning here. You will not necessarily know whether there is anyone in the room with underlying conditions e.g. someone who has diabetes, or some other condition which means going over the breaks makes things difficult for them. Do not just dismiss this and assume that as the participants are adults, they can look after themselves. It is all part of being a good and caring facilitator to be considerate of all your participants needs. Try to have a short break every 90 minutes or so and a longer break for lunch if you having a full day learning process.



4.2.3: Conclusion:

These are very broadly some of the practicalities you might encounter on your learning process pilot. Good preparation and planning will always ensure that the day goes smoothly. Since you have spent the previous Modules finely crafting your learning process by contextually profiling, engaging with stakeholders and designing the learning materials, you now only have to implement and evaluate the process you have so carefully designed. In our next and final section of this course we work with how to best evaluate your learning process

in order to improve its future design and delivery. Remember that this is your pilot so sometimes there will be a few mistakes. Do not count these as failures. Rather they are part and parcel of the process that is putting you on the road to becoming a great facilitator and NRM trainer. Always note down what went wrong and how it can be improved. Also note what went well and congratulate yourself. Running a learning process that you have designed and implemented by yourself is a great accomplishment and it is part of your journey to becoming a reflexive practitioner.

